Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any concrete steps have been or are being taken towards evolving and implementing an Economic Oriented Foreign Policy, as mooted at the recent All India Congress Committee's Session at Faridabad; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of External Affairs has taken several measures towards giving greater economic orientation to India's foreign policy. The changes that have taken place in the global, geo-political scenario and the imperatives of our own economic reform programme have made it imperative for us to adapt our foreign policy accordingly, so that our economic and commercial interests get due priority. In this context, the Ministry & its Missions and posts abroad have accorded top priority to attracting foreign investment, securing access to required technologies, aggressively promoting our exports and ensuring continued flow of financial resources on concessional terms from bilateral and multilateral channels. These are recognised as important foreign policy objectives requiring close economic ties with major powers such as the European Community, USA, Japan, ASEAN and the Gulf and are getting the full and concerted attention of the Ministry of External Affairs. As a part of this effort, during the recent visits of the Prime Ministers of Spain and UK and the German Chancellor, special attention was paid to economic interactions with these countries. Interactive sessions were arranged between senior Government officials and the high level business delegations accompanying the British and Spanish Prime Ministers and the German Chancellor. The Indo-British Partnership initiative which brings the business communities of the two countries together to work towards closer economic relations is one example of concrete measures taken towards imparting a greater economic orientation to our foreign policy.

Extradition Treaties with India

254. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of the countries with whom India have extradition treaty till today; and

(b) the number of countries with whom Extradition Treaty is under consideration ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) We have extradition treaty with eight countries ; Belgium, Bhutan, Canada, Nepal, Netherlands, UK, USA and Uganda.

(b) Proposals for concluding extradition treaty have been made to or have been received from nine countries : France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Namibia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and UAE.

Pending Passport Applications

255. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) how many applications are pending for issue of passport in different passport offices and since how long; and

(b) what steps Government are taking to expedite the issuing of the passports ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) The total number of pending applications for fresh passports as on 2-4-1993 was 10.2 lakhs of which 7.83 lakhs were pending over one month.

(b) Government have taken a number of steps to expedite issue of passports which inter alia include augmentation of the staff strength; increase in the supply of passport booklets and streamlining procedures to increase productivity and reduce delays.